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Oct. 24, 2013

Insurance giant [WellPoint](#) Inc., a key player in the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, said it remains optimistic about the healthcare expansion despite the rocky start of a federal insurance exchange.

WellPoint's chief executive, Joseph Swedish, and other industry executives are meeting Wednesday with White House officials about continuing problems with the 36-state federal insurance marketplace and its troubled healthcare.gov website.

Many consumers have been unable to log in and get basic information about their insurance options since enrollment began Oct. 1.

The nation's second-largest health insurer also released third-quarter results Wednesday. On a conference call with analysts and investors, Swedish said public interest in the health overhaul has been strong and the call volume at the company's service center doubled during the first week of enrollment. But he acknowledged that consumers have run into technical challenges when trying to sign up.

“We remain optimistic about the long-term membership growth opportunities on the exchanges,” Swedish said on the conference call, “but given that we are just three weeks into the open enrollment period, it is really too early to draw any definitive conclusions.”

WellPoint stands to be affected more than other insurers by the Affordable Care Act due to its sizable number of individual and small-businesses customers. WellPoint runs Blue Cross plans in California and 13 other states.

In California, the company's Anthem Blue Cross unit is one of 12 insurers

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Some investors were disappointed by the lack of a profit forecast for 2014. Shares of WellPoint were off \$2.71, or 3%, to \$85.72 in midday trading Wednesday.

For the third quarter, the Indianapolis company reported a 5% drop in net income on higher revenue.

WellPoint said profit in the quarter ended Sept. 30 was \$656.2 million, or \$2.16 a share, down from 691.2 million, or \$2.15 a share, in the same period a year ago.

Revenue in the quarter climbed 17% to \$17.7 billion, boosted by the company's acquisition of Medicaid insurer Amerigroup Corp.

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